

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Bel Aire  
other names/site number VDHR Id # 002-0001

2. Location

street & number 4710 Dickerson Road not for publication N/A  
city or town Charlottesville vicinity X  
state Virginia code VA county Albemarle code 003 zip code 22911

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  x  nomination      request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  x  meets      does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant      nationally      statewide  x  locally. (      See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official Date  
Virginia Department of Historic Resources  
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property      meets      does not meet the National Register criteria. (      See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:  
     entered in the National Register  
     See continuation sheet.  
     determined eligible for the National Register  
     See continuation sheet.  
     determined not eligible for the National Register  
     removed from the National Register  
     other (explain):  
Signature of the Keeper  
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply):

- ☒ private
- ☐ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box):

- ☒ building(s)
- ☐ district
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>6</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions):

Cat: <u>DOMESTIC</u>	Sub: <u>Single dwelling, Secondary Structures</u>
<u>AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE</u>	<u>Storage, Animal Facility</u>
<u>FUNERARY</u>	<u>Cemetery</u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions):

Cat: <u>DOMESTIC</u>	Sub: <u>Single dwelling, Secondary Structures</u>
<u>AGRICULTURE/SUBSITENCE</u>	<u>Storage</u>
<u>FUNERARY</u>	<u>Cemetery</u>

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions):

EARLY REPUBLIC: Federal

Materials (Enter categories from instructions):

foundation:	<u>BRICK</u>
roof:	<u>ASPHALT: Shingle</u>
walls:	<u>BRICK</u>
	<u>WOOD: Plywood</u>
other:	<u></u>

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 15.388

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet):

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1)	17	0725601	4226837	3)	17	0725295	4226855
2)	17	0725445	4226963	4)	17	0725254	4226689
5)	17	0725445	4226683	See continuation sheet.			

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/titleKristie Baynard/Architectural Historian

organizationArcadia Preservation, LLCdate7/28/06

street & numberPO Box 138telephone434.293.7772

city or townKeswickstateVAzip code22947

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

nameSidney and Sally Hecht

street & number4710 Dickerson RoadtelephoneN/A

city or townCharlottesvillestateVAzip code22911

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to Keeper, National Register of Historic Places, 1849 "C" Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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**BEL AIRE (002-0001)  
Albemarle County, Virginia**

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Summary Description

Built around 1825 by James Michie, Bel Aire is a Federal style brick dwelling that stands two-and-a-half stories in height, is four bays wide on the façade, and features a double-pile rectangular-shaped footprint. Set on a raised basement with a five-course American bond brick foundation, the house is constructed in a Flemish bond on the front and west elevations, whereas the rear and east elevations display five-course American bond. Sheltering the center two bays on the façade is an original flat-roof portico. The house is capped with a side-gable, asphalt-shingle roof with interior-end double brick chimneys each with a corbeled cap. A parapet wall and chimney curtain connect the two interior-end chimneys on both the north and south ends. Other architectural features of the façade include a brick water table and a denticulated cornice on the front and rear elevations that appears to have been added at a later date. A shed-roof addition projects from the east elevation dating to circa 1860 or 1870. A one-story sunroom addition, located across a portion of the rear elevation, dates to circa 1980.

Site Description

Bel Aire is located approximately nine miles northwest of Charlottesville on Dickerson Road in Albemarle County. The house is sited 0.3 mile west of North Fork of Rivanna River and is set back a short distance from Dickerson Road, which was originally known as Piney Mountain Road. The property's eastern border extends along the river and the house is accessed with a circular gravel driveway. Facing south, the house is situated on a grassy and wooded tract of land totaling 15.3 acres. The land is level immediately surrounding the house, however, it slopes down on both the east and west sides. A brick path leads straight from the driveway to the house. The mostly level grassy parcel is dotted with large trees and the house is surrounded with foundation plantings. The perimeter of the property is surrounded by woods.

A circa 1945 concrete-block garage stands to the east side and a chicken coop is located to the rear of the house. A cemetery is sited a short distance off the rear northwest corner of the house. A corn crib is located on the property adjacent to Dickerson Road near a metal truss bridge that crosses the North Fork of the Rivanna River.

Exterior

Bel Aire's façade is dominated by the portico which is supported with paired Tuscan columns and two pilasters with an accented entasis. The porch features both a tongue-and-groove floor with random width floorboards and a wide frieze below a rooftop balcony with turned balusters. According to historic photos, the balcony balustrade is not original. Leading to the porch are eight central brick steps, which are not original. The first story of the facade contains one single-leaf entry and three six-over-six windows. All windows throughout the house except where noted are six-over-six wood sashes supported with square-edged wood sills and lug lintels with square corner blocks. The center window sheltered by the portico features a two-paneled spandrel. The front entry contains a six-paneled wood door and is illuminated with a rectangular three-light transom. The recessed entry features a paneled reveal with three-panel sides and a two-panel soffit. Each of the windows and doors is characterized by non-operable louvered wood shutters. The second story is pierced with four six-over-six windows and the basement contains two six-over-

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three wood-sash windows covered with horizontal wood bars. Each of the basement windows throughout the house is six-over-three wood sash.

The façade of the house has undergone several historic replacements including two doors, one on each story, the porch balcony, and front stoop. The façade originally contained two front entries as well as a single-leaf door that lead out onto the porch balcony. The window sheltered by the portico was the original second entry. According to historic photographs, this door was replaced during the 1940s or 1950s. These same photographs show a door on the second story in the bay second from the right. The balcony is a replacement, as a 1936 photograph shows no balcony atop the portico. The brick steps leading up to the porch are historic, however, the bricks do not appear to be contemporary to the house. Historic photographs reveal what appears to be a concrete stoop. However, the original stoop was most likely constructed of wood.

The west elevation contains three windows on both the first and second stories, while the attic contains a single-sash, semi-circular window with multiple radiating lights. The basement is three bays wide with two six-over-three windows, however, the center bay features a blind window.

The rear elevation, unlike the façade, features asymmetrical fenestration and has a circa 1980 one-story, one-room addition. The first story of the main block contains two windows and one doorway, of which only one window is visible with the rear addition. The doorway originally contained a window and was removed with the rear addition. The second story contains three windows. The rear addition is set on a wood-post foundation, is clad with wood siding, and contains a bank of fifteen ten-light vinyl casement windows. The wood post foundation is covered with lattice making the raised basement under the addition indiscernible. Not visible from the exterior is a centrally-located single-leaf door accessing the main block and a single-leaf door accessing the raised basement of the circa 1860/1870 addition.

Continuing to the east elevation, the first story of the main block is the only story not visible due to the more prominent circa 1860/1870 brick one-story addition. Both the second and attic story contain a single window with the attic window noticeably smaller in scale than the others maintaining a similar sill and lintel. The basement of the main block contains a single-leaf door accessed by a closed stringer stair.

The circa 1860/1870 addition is two bays wide. The brickwork is not laid in a set pattern, however, the majority of the construction appears to be five-course American bond. Much of it is irregularly set using six-, seven-, and eight-course American bond construction in addition to the five course bond. This addition contains a single-leaf six-paneled door and one six-over-six window. The window features a molded architrave and does not have the same lug lintel with corner blocks as the original circa 1827 windows. The raised basement of the addition contains two in-filled windows covered with horizontal bars. Characterizing the overhanging eaves are Italianate-style, scroll-shaped eave brackets and a boxed wood cornice. Before the addition, the east elevation contained an exterior doorway on the first story.

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Interior

The unusual interior of Bel Aire is reminiscent of a hall-parlor plan in the front half and a standard central passage plan in the rear. The rear half of the main block contains a dining room, a stair to the second floor, and a bedroom. This bedroom originally served as a servant's space.

The front entrance into house opens into the hall, which contains the stair to the upper floors. The hall also opens into the adjacent parlor and the dining room to the rear. The second original entrance on the front (later replaced with a window) opened directly into the parlor. Directly across this entry/window bay in the parlor, originally stood a doorway that opened to a central stair that leads to the basement. At present, the fourth room on the first floor is accessed by way of the dining room and across the central stair passage. Interestingly, the fourth room also has a doorway that opens onto the central stair leading to the basement. Originally, the fourth room was for servant's use, possibly for food preparation or laundry. The service stair in the back half of the house leads to the second floor directly to a small bedroom which may have been a nursery.

The floors throughout the hall extending into the parlor are approximately four-inch-wide, heart-pine tongue-and-groove floorboards. The baseboard around the perimeter of the hall rises eight and one quarter inches and the base molding consists of a several fillets to a quirked ovolo terminating with a sunken fillet separating the fascia board. Painted plaster covers the walls and ceiling throughout the hall and the first and second floors.

The front entry into the hall contains a six-panel door with flush moldings and flush panels on both the exterior and interior. The molding profile of the door surround consists of a fascia, a prone ovolo molding, a separating fillet to a larger fascia, to a sunken fascia, terminating to a boltel. The surround continues down to eight-inch plinth blocks. The base blocks feature a partial flat face with an inward splay towards the door. Windows and doors throughout the main block feature similar molded surrounds. A chair rail extends around the perimeter of the room and consists of fascia, sunken fillet, a bead molding to two separating fascias terminating in a second bead molding. The east wall features the projecting chimney breast flanked with a buffet in the alcove of one side. The fireplace has a brick hearth, brick surround, and the Federal-style mantle stands five feet in height. The molding profile supporting the mantle shelf consists of a sunken fillet separating an echinus binded with a quirked ovolo terminating to a fillet. The mantle frieze features a carved paterae and a gougework cornice featuring a band of darts. Supporting the mantle are reeded colonettes with Doric capitals. The chimney breast is detailed with a beaded molding on the two corners from the floor to the height of the mantle shelf. A picture rail is applied to the front of the chimney breast, which does not appear to date to circa 1827, however, it may have been added during the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

The buffet flanking the chimney breast is the full height of the wall and features two separate cabinets both with two-leaf doors. The top doors are six-panel flush molded whereas the doors below the dado are two panel flush molded. It has a similar casing as the windows and doors extending to the plinth blocks.

Located immediately adjacent to the front entry in the hall is the quarter-landing, open-stringer stair that leads to the second floor and attic. The stair features a thin turned newel post set on a plinth, a rounded hand rail, beaded square balusters, and scrolled stair brackets typical of the Federal period. One of the interesting features of the stair is the

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addition of a balustrade inset along the south wall. The balustrade is also applied across the window to continue the visual effect. This banister is visually supported with reeded posts on plinths. These posts are located at the base of the stair, the corner of the landing, and at the second floor landing.

The stair stringer is covered with circa 1825 flush paneling and a small closet is located underneath the stair. The closet holds a six-panel flush molded wood door with a brass knob. The door surround features thin reeded pilasters on plinths terminating with capitals using a cyma reversa molding and a banded diamond pattern on the frieze. The reeded pilasters appear to mimic the false stair posts inset into the walls. It appears that a closet did originally exist under the stair, however, it was enlarged at a later date, possibly during the late nineteenth century extending to the east wall. Evidence to support this expansion is the baseboard in hall that continues into the closet. This baseboard is applied on the east wall and extends along the south wall stopping at the edge of the window. Underneath the window extending across rest of the closet is a smaller more modest baseboard rising four and three quarter inches in height with only an astragal base molding and no shoe molding. In addition, a cut in the floorboards along the width of the closet directly lines up with the change in baseboards at the window's edge. Also, the window trim does not extend to the floor as it does on the window bays in the parlor. Finally, a picture rail remains on the two walls, which seems an oddity for a closet.

Access to the parlor from the hall is through large double-leaf eight-panel doors. The dining room is accessed from the front hall through similar doors. The casings for these double-leaf doors is similar to the front door, however, they are much larger in scale measuring ten and one half inches wide compared to the five inch window and door moldings. The doors are eight-panel with flush moldings and porcelain knobs. In 1987, the double-doors were grained, however, it is unknown if this was the original finish.

Many of the details and decorative elements in the hall are repeated in the parlor including similar floors, baseboard, chair rail, mantle, fireplace hearth and surround, window and door surrounds, and plaster ceiling. The walls are plaster with flat-panel wainscoting below the chair rail. The in-filled doorway gives no evidence of containing a door on the parlor side. Around the perimeter of the parlor is a picture rail similar to the one found in the hall.

Unlike the hall, the sides of the chimney breast in the parlor are characterized with three molded panels. In addition, along the full height of the chimney breast the corners are detailed with a beaded molding. The windows feature molded reveals that consist of a torus separated by a raised fillet to a sunken fillet separating a double torus molding, which actually appear pointed than rounded. Differing from the three windows in the room, is the bay that originally contained a front entry. This reveal features a torus to a fillet connecting a second torus molding.

To the rear of the hall is the dining room which also maintains many similar details as the hall and parlor such as flooring, baseboard, chair rail, mantle shelf molding, and double-leaf doors and door casing. Casings on the two windows on the north wall do not continue to the floor like the windows in the parlor. Also unlike the parlor, the windows in the dining room feature splayed reveals that are not molded. The six-panel, flush-molded door on the east wall opens into the circa 1860/1870 addition, which now functions as a kitchen. This door originally led to the exterior and is characterized by a paneled reveal similar to the front entry. The doorway leading to the rear addition on the north wall originally contained a window according to an historic photo. The door casing has a cut that



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matches up with the height of the other two windows on the north wall. Additionally, the height of this doorway is the same as the adjacent windows, whereas the door to the exterior on the east wall is much lower in height. The doorway leading to the back stair has a similar casing and paneled molded reveal as the other doors. The crown molding around the perimeter of the dining room was added in 1994.

Rising five feet in height, the dining room's fireplace mantle shelf is supported with pilasters on plinth blocks with three columns of reeding. The mantle also features a flat frieze. The fireplace has a slate hearth and the chimney breast is detailed with a beaded molding on the corners that extends only up to the mantle shelf.

Between the dining room and the servant's room at the back of the house is a closed-stringer stair that leads to the second floor. This area features a non-historic chair rail and a baseboard similar to that in the dining room. The wall stringer features a beaded molding.

The servant's room, now a bedroom, has undergone several changes since original construction around 1827. The room was modified by the addition of a closet and bathroom on the west side with the construction of a partition wall built in 1992. Originally, this room was served by a working fireplace, which has since been in-filled and no longer visible due to the additions. The left alcove flanking the chimney breast was modified with bookshelves during the twentieth century (date unknown). A closet was added enclosing the bookshelves. The baseboard and chair rail of the servant's room extend into the closet space. The bathroom contains one window on the west wall, which has an identical surround and reveal as the dining room windows. The materials in the bathroom are not historic such as the six-panel door and tile floor. However, the protruding chimney breast remains evident.

The servant's room originally featured wood unfinished floorboards painted brown, which showed much wear. During the first half of the twentieth century, the floor was covered with linoleum. The current owners removed the linoleum and refinished the original floorboards. The base molding of the baseboard is comprised of a cyma recta to an echinus terminating with a small fascia. There is no shoe molding. The chair rail in the room is similar to the rest of the house. The crown molding is similar to the dining room and was installed by the current owner. There are two doors on the east wall; one from the back stair and one that leads to the basement stair. The door leading into the workroom from the back stair is a six-panel door with flush molding and slightly raised panels. These doors are similar to one another and have trim similar to the front two rooms.

The addition on the east elevation originally contained one room as it does today. This room contains an exterior door and the doorway into the dining room. This space has undergone some historic and non-historic alterations, the most notable being the conversion of the office into a kitchen. Renovated in 1987, the kitchen has a tile floor and plaster walls. The surround for the exterior door features a cyma recta molding and the door is six-panel with flush moldings. The surround for the kitchen-side of the dining room door also features a cyma recta molding profile. Similar to the dining room, the kitchen also features a crown molding. In 1987, a modern railing and banister with a square newel post stands above the stair well to the quarter-turn stair that leads to the basement.

Built circa 1980, the one-room sunroom addition on the rear is pierced with fifteen vinyl casement windows. Two doorways open into the addition, one from the dining room and the second from the 1860/1870 addition.

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The second floor hall features similar floors, door and window trim, walls, ceiling, and picture rail similar to the first floor. The six and one half inch high baseboard features an echinus base molding and no shoe molding. The chair rail has a slightly different molding profile with a fillet to a sunken fillet separating the astragal molding continuing to a fascia then a second sunken fillet terminating to an astragal. A closet stands on the east wall and contains a three-panel, flush molded door. It does not appear that this closet is original. One of the wall corners in the stair hall features a bead molding similar to the ones on the first floor chimney breasts. One of the interesting aspects of the house is the use of iron tie rods at the eaves of the second floor, protecting the house against earthquake damage. The tie rods were installed during the early nineteenth century.

From the stair hall is access to two bedrooms and a bathroom. The stair continues as a quarter-landing stair to the attic. The bathroom is not original, which is evident in the slight difference of door height to the bedroom doors. The bathroom contains a six-panel wood door with a brass knob and a lock box. The window bay in the bathroom originally contained a single-leaf door that opened onto the front porch. This door was removed during the 1940s or 1950s according to historic photographs. The bathroom floor is covered with tile and the walls are painted plaster.

The first bedroom on the second floor has the same flooring except that it is knotted pine. It also has a similar chair rail, picture rail, plaster walls and ceiling as the first floor. The windows are similar to the dining room windows. The fireplace includes a brick hearth and surround, and a mantle shelf similar to those on the first floor. However, the mantle rises four feet nine inches, which is slightly shorter than the first floor mantles. The pilasters on the mantle stand on plinth blocks and feature two columns of reeding. The mantle also features a flat frieze and the corners of the protruding chimney breast are detailed with a bead molding.

A doorway on the west wall leads to a second bedroom, which is not accessed by the hall. This second bedroom is presently used as a sitting room. Between the two bedrooms is a very small closet space, that may have been used as a type of water closet or just as a small throughway between the two rooms. This space has a similar baseboard, chair rail, and picture rail as the bedroom. The two doors that open into this closet space are not molded on the closet side but feature flush moldings on the bedroom sides.

The second bedroom has two doorways, one from the previously mentioned closet and the second by way of the back stair located between the dining room and service room. Details and elements in this second bedroom are similar to the other rooms; including flooring, chair rail, picture rail, window and door trim. The fireplace in the room features a similar brick hearth, surround, and mantle shelf as the first bedroom. The simple mantle cornice below the mantle shelf features an ovolo molding profile.

Decorative elements in the third bedroom (now a master bedroom) similar to the other rooms include flooring, doors, chair rail, window and door trim, fireplace and mantle, picture rail, and plaster walls and ceiling. The baseboard features a similar base molding as the first bedroom, however, it has an applied shoe molding that is not original. A set of closets with two pairs of sliding doors were added by the current owners on the east wall.

The stair to the attic door is embellished with stair brackets and beaded balusters. The stair ends at a similar newel post as seen on the first and second floors. The wall stringer features a baseboard that rises five and three quarter

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inches in height and is detailed with a quirked ovolo base molding. The window opening onto the stair leading to the attic features a casing with an ovolo, separated by a fascia, terminating with an astragal molding.

The attic was finished in 2003 and was converted into three rooms, a bedroom, a bathroom, and an office. The door trim on both sides of the attic door was added and consists of molding profile of a cyma recta to a fascia terminating with an astragal. The floor is covered with non-historic pine floorboards.

The English basement extends under the entire house and has been renovated by the current owners. It is separated into four rooms with a center stair under the main block of the house. The space underneath the 1860/1870 addition was originally used as a cold storage space. The southwest room was originally covered with plaster, which was removed in 2004. This room has a projecting chimney breast, however, there is no fireplace but rather an arched lintel. This room has two doorways on the east wall, one leading to the southeast room and one to the center stair hall. Each room of the main block has a stone floor.

The southeast room features a fireplace on the east wall flanked by a single-leaf exterior door and double-leaf doors to the stair leading to the first floor kitchen. The exterior door is a nine-light over two-panel door with flush moldings. The door is not original and features a cyma recta molding profile. The wood doors on the two-leaf entry are three panel with flush moldings and are not original to the 1827 construction. However, both doors on this wall are historic.

The front room opens directly into the rear northeast room. Featuring a much larger fireplace, the northeast room originally functioned as a kitchen. Interestingly, flanking the chimney breast are the original food storage cabinets and bins. Flanking the other side of the chimney breast is a new doorway into the wine cellar added in 2005.

A doorway from the kitchen on the west wall leads to the back stair. This doorway features a modern paneled door reveal and a modern cyma recta molded trim. The center hall features an open/closed stringer straight-flight stair with the original square balusters and hand rail. The stair leads directly to the in-filled doorway to the parlor. Modern trim depicts the location of the original living room door at the top of the stair. Off to the side of the stair is the original doorway to the servant's room on the first floor. This doorway features an original paneled reveal. Underneath the stair is a closet with a four-panel door with flush molding and modern trim. The stair stringer is also clad with vertical boards. Across from the stair is a single-leaf exterior four-paneled door with slightly raised panels and a paneled reveal.

Accessed through the center hall, is the fourth room of the basement that is currently used as a utility room. The modern utilities have been enclosed with circa 2004 closets with bi-fold doors.

The small area underneath the circa 1860/1870 addition originally functioned as a cold storage room, which is now a wine cellar. Climate control was recently added to this space. The room is detailed with an arched brick lintel across the width of the room. The walls are unfinished brick and the floor is covered with cement.

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Secondary Resources (all contributing)

*Cemetery*

Organized in several rows, the cemetery is located at the edge of the woods to the rear of the house. There are several trees interspersed throughout the site. Only one marker has an inscription, that of James Michie, who was born May 5, 1788 and died on March 11, 1850. During the 1970s, the Dickerson family moved their interments from the cemetery. The location of these reinterments is unknown. An iron fence in very poor condition encompasses the cemetery.

*Corn Crib*

This one story wood-frame corn crib features a rectangular-shaped footprint, is set on a rubble stone pier foundation, and is capped with a side-gable metal roof. Partially constructed from reused timbers, the corncrib is divided on the exterior with two different cladding types. One section is clad with full-height vertical slats spaced apart and the second features weatherboards with vents at the eaves comprised of similar vertical spaced slats spaced. The interior is separated into two rooms, which matches the exterior siding division. The room, which is clad with full-height vertical slats on the exterior, is divided into several sections. Details that help date the building are the circular-sawn floor joists and the use of a ridge board dating the corn crib near the last quarter of the nineteenth century. This corn crib is an unusual example in Albemarle County because of its size but mostly due to the multi-functional form as illustrated with its interior divisions. It may have held more than one type of grain, such as wheat, oats, or corn.

*Chicken Coop*

Previously surveyed as a corn crib, this building however, does not have the typical form, location, roof, or siding of a corncrib. Instead, the building appears to be a chicken coop dating to circa 1920. The one-story wood-frame structure features weatherboard cladding and a side-gable, asphalt-shingle roof. The foundation was not discernable, although a few bricks were visible. Detailing includes a single-leaf door, overhanging eaves, a boxed wood cornice, and four small open window bays across the side elevations.

*Garage*

Built circa 1945, the concrete-block garage is one story in height and two bays wide with a front-gable, asphalt-shingle roof. The façade is pierced with one roll-up wood panel-and-light garage door on the façade and a two-over-two metal window. It contains a single-leaf, panel-and-light wood door on the rear elevation.

*Foundations*

Near the cemetery is a small concrete foundation. It is not clear to what this is related.

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Statement of Significance

Bel Aire, a two-and-a-half story brick dwelling located in northern Albemarle County, was built for James H. Michie circa 1825. Slightly smaller in scale than the county's finest contemporary houses, Bel Aire is a unique regional example of the Federal style (1780-1830), exhibiting many finely crafted Federal features. Additionally, the Germanic-influenced facade and floor plan make Bel Aire's design a rarity in Albemarle County. James H. Michie was a member of the socially and politically important Michie family, and was highly successful within the county's government, serving as magistrate and then county sheriff.

Criteria Statement

The house is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for its association with James H. Michie in the area of Politics/Government and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture; both for local significance.

Michie Family

The Michie family is a prominent and long-standing family in Virginia with its origins dating back to 1716 according to the Michie family history.<sup>1</sup> 'Scotch' John Michie, involved in an unsuccessful rebellion against the Jacobite rule in Scotland, was deported to Virginia in 1716. Once in Virginia, he settled in Hanover County, acquired his freedom, and eventually moved westward to Louisa County. In 1763, he purchased 1,250 acres along the Rivanna River which was originally part of a patent of John Henry's, father of Patrick Henry. It is on these lands that several of 'Scotch' John's sons proceeded to make improvements, one of which has historically been known as *Michie Tavern* (VDHR # 002-0093).

'Scotch' John's will, written in 1772, states that upon his land his sons, James, Patrick, and William each were to receive the land on which each had already made significant improvements. By 1772, it appears William Michie had his residence (later known as Michie Tavern) constructed along the highly-traveled Buck Mountain Road, which led from Richmond west over the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Immediately following his father's death, William Michie, who served as a Corporal in Captain Murry's First Artillery Regiment of the Virginia Continental Troops, spent the winter at Valley Forge between 1777 and 1778.<sup>2</sup> William Michie's political prominence grew out of this post which was later solidified when he became a signer to the Albemarle County Declaration of Independence in 1779.

In 1784, William Michie acquired a county license to operate a yearly ordinary at his house, which became known as Michie Tavern. During the eighteenth century, local laws typically forbade the lower classes such as servants, apprentices, blacks, Indians, and seamen to frequent licensed taverns. Michie's Tavern probably followed suit catering only to those of a higher class of social or political standing.

William Michie prospered from his tavern and became one of Albemarle County's leading residents, which led to his

appointment as magistrate in 1791. Michie served in the magisterial position with other important figures such as Wilson

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Cary Nicholas, William D. Meriwether, Tandy Key, Benjamin Harris, Bezaleel Brown, Bernard Brown, William Clark, Thomas W. Lewis and Thomas Garth.<sup>3</sup> To attain appointment as magistrate in Albemarle County was recognition of being one of the county's most distinguished and successful citizens. This recognition was also laid on those who were appointed Sheriff, which was a position typically held by a magistrate. After twelve years as magistrate, William Michie was appointed Sheriff in 1803. In addition to serving as magistrate, William along with an older brother, Robert Michie, were two of the first selected Vestrymen in the Fredericksville Parish, which consisted of Northern Albemarle County and nearly all of Louisa County. William Michie died in 1811 at the age of sixty-two.<sup>4</sup>

One of William Michie's sons, John Augustus Michie, became a magistrate for Albemarle County, like his father, in 1807. John Augustus Michie married Frances Early and the couple had twelve children between 1788 and 1813. The first child was a son, James H. Michie, who was born on May 5, 1788. Influenced by several generations of politicians, James H. Michie followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, and became involved in Albemarle County politics. Five years following the death of William Michie, his grandfather, James Michie was appointed County magistrate in 1816 at the age of twenty-eight. By this time, the Michie family had long been active in local government and became one of the leading families in Albemarle County.

James Michie held title as magistrate for twenty-seven years when in 1843 he was appointed County Sheriff for a two-year term. It was during his term as magistrate that James Michie built Bel Aire circa 1825. Having formed a large plantation on the Rivanna River, Michie most likely developed his wealth primarily through the farming of tobacco as well as other crops and livestock. At the time he built Bel Aire, Michie was thirty-nine years old and well established socially, politically, and financially. Bel Aire is the property most closely associated with his active career.

**Bel Aire History**

During the 1820s, James H. Michie made several large land purchases on or near the Rivanna River. In 1820, at the age of 32, Michie purchased 201.5 acres from Marshall and Mildred Head on the south side of Piney Mountain for \$1,209. The deed states that this was the current place of residence for the Head family.<sup>5</sup> Michie's second purchase in the area was in 1824 for 129.5 acres on the Rivanna River from cousins within the Michie family, the heirs of Mary Michie Maupin.<sup>6</sup> From the language of this deed, the property contained several farm tenements but no main dwelling. A third deed dating to November 4, 1826 lists James Michie purchasing 265.75 acres "on the south side of the North River" for \$3,216 from Nancy Michie, Edmond Brown and his wife, Theodosia Michie Brown. Nancy Michie and Theodosia Brown were two younger sisters of James Michie. It is assumed that the North River refers to the North fork of the Rivanna River since a North River does not exist in Albemarle County and the property has historically been bounded by the North Fork of the Rivanna River. Vernacularly, it may have been called the North River. This last deed to James Michie does not mention any buildings or improvements on the property.

Bel Aire appears to have been built on one of the latter two land purchases. A mid-1820s building date is reinforced by the construction materials and decorative elements used including machine headed cut nails, reciprocating saw marks, and

six-panel doors with applied moldings. *Ante-bellum Albemarle* explains that J. Augustus Michie, the first son to James and Frances Michie, was born at Bel Aire and the Federal Census gives an 1826 birth date. Based on this information, it is

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assumed that Bel Aire was constructed on the 129.5 acres he purchased in 1824 from the heirs of Mary Michie Maupin.

Michie began his family life in the late 1810s marrying Frances Garth, born in 1796 to Thomas Garth, Jr. They had nine children, five of which were born at Bel Aire including J. Augustus Michie (b. 1826), Thomas G. Michie (b. October 1831), Theresa Michie, Alexander H. Michie, and Henry Clay Michie (b. January 9, 1842).<sup>7</sup> At the time of his death on March 11, 1850 at the age of sixty-one, James Michie had acquired a number of adjacent properties giving his plantation a total of 1,291 acres. Following Michie's death in 1850, his wife granted the entire acreage to her first son, J. Augustus Michie when he reached his maturity at twenty-four years of age.<sup>8</sup>

According to the 1860 Federal census, J. Augustus Michie resided at Bel Aire with his wife, Susan R., his two children, Josephine and William Pitt, as well as his mother, Frances D. Michie. At this time, Susan Michie was twenty-eight and her two children were five and three respectively.<sup>9</sup> Frances Michie was sixty-four years of age and is listed as having real estate valued at \$3,000 and personal property valued at \$8,000. This figure is quite diminutive compared to J. Augustus Michie's values of \$30,000 for real estate and personal property at \$40,000. The Federal Agricultural Census for Michie in 1860 only listed a six-hundred-acre farm, whereas land records indicate he owned over 1,300 acres. At this time, the census counted only twenty-three farms out of 935 in Albemarle County that contained one-thousand acres or more. Therefore, Michie was part of an elite group of farmers and gentry landowners with the majority of the county farms, as well as in the state of Virginia, sized between one hundred and five hundred acres. The federal census lists Michie with \$12,000 cash and a value of \$300 for farm implements. He had \$1,400 worth of livestock, \$1,190 of slaughtered animals, and his largest cash crop was tobacco with 10,000 bushels in 1860.<sup>10</sup> It is assumed that his father, James Michie, would also have been a part of the county's higher social class having built Bel Aire and farmed a nearly 1,300 acre plantation.

Although not grouped with the highest valued houses and plantations within the county, Bel Aire would still have been considered a very fine house. One of the wealthiest men in Albemarle County during the early nineteenth century was Wilson Cary Nicholas who built the large estate of Mount Warren circa 1780. According to the Mutual Assurance policies, Mount Warren was insured for \$5,000 in 1805. Many of the most prominent and highest valued rural estates in the county were insured at similar values such as *Monticello* built by Thomas Jefferson (1769-1809, VDHR # 002-0050), *Enniscorthy* built by John Coles Sr. (1784, VDHR # 002-0780), *Belvoir* built by Colonel John Walker (1790, VDHR # 002-0945), and *Carr's Brook* built by Peter Carr (1790 ca., VDHR # 002-0011). Bel Aire is not listed in the Mutual Assurance policies, however, houses of similar stature to Bel Aire from the first quarter of the nineteenth century were valued slightly less than the ones previously mentioned. Houses within this group include *Old Woodville* (1796, VDHR # 002-0062) built by Walter Coles and insured in 1816 for \$3,300, *Blenheim* (built late 18<sup>th</sup> century, burned) built by William C. Carter and insured in 1799 for \$2,650, and *Viewmont* (1800 ca., VDHR # 002-0080) built by John Harris and insured for \$2,650 to name a few.

Several decades later, the wealthiest citizens in Albemarle County in 1860 included the likes of John Randolph, Tucker Coles, Robert Rives, William Garth, Selina Coles and her son Peyton Coles. Of this small group, Robert Rives of *Forest*

*Hill Plantation* (VDHR # 002-0876) had the highest recorded amount listed in the Federal Census with a real estate value of \$100,000 and personal property valued at \$180,000. These numbers were exceptionally high and this level of wealth was a rarity within the county. Interestingly, each of the wealthiest citizens listed in the census is noted as having a farming

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occupation. The values listed in the census for J. Augustus Michie were also high, and he, too, is listed as a farmer. The majority of the rural residents in Albemarle County were listed as farmers, day laborers, and overseers with combined real estate and personal property wealth ranging from \$50 to approximately \$5,000 compared to the \$70,000 listed for Michie.<sup>11</sup>

Interestingly, the Federal census lists J. Augustus Michie as a general farmer in 1860 and again in 1870. However, the obituary lists him as a physician. The Michie family history written by Thomas Johnson Michie in 1948 explains that J. Augustus Michie attained a degree in Medicine, however, he was never a practicing physician. The family history states that Dr. Michie served as a Captain in the 56<sup>th</sup> Virginia Regiment during the Civil War.<sup>12</sup> The census of 1870 describes Michie's real estate valued at \$60,000 and his personal property at \$1,750. Such a dramatic drop in personal property value was not uncommon in Virginia immediately after the Civil War particularly with slaves no longer included as personal property.

During the 1870s, J. Augustus Michie is listed in the Albemarle County Land Books (1872 and 1876) with 1,347.5 acres. The buildings on this property are valued at \$3,000 and the total value of the property including buildings and land was \$24,255. At this time, J. Augustus Michie was the most financially successful Michie in the Rivanna District of Albemarle County.

Soon thereafter, Michie conveyed the property with 1,375 acres to E.W. Early, Thomas G. Michie, and William Michie, who served as Trustees for the property.<sup>13</sup> The deed states that J. Augustus Michie was in debt to various persons for a total sum of \$30,000. The Trustees were required to sell the property in order for the debts to be settled. However, this did not occur prompting the Chancery Suit between the Peoples National Bank vs. Michie. In 1884, James D. Jones, George Perkins, W.D. Dabney, R.T.W. Duke, and Mason Gordon conveyed a portion of the property totaling 372 acres to William Pitt Michie, son of J. Augustus Michie.<sup>14</sup> Five years later, William Pitt Michie and Mason Gordon, Trustee, deeded the property to H. Clay Michie, brother to J. Augustus Michie.<sup>15</sup> According to the deed, the property included 372 acres with the dwelling house, kitchen, two tenement houses, and other buildings. At this time, Henry Clay Michie was 47 years of age and married to Eunice Michie, age forty-three.

Henry Clay Michie's background includes service to the Confederate Army during the Civil War. H. Clay Michie joined the Confederate Army while attending the University of Virginia. He eventually succeeded his brother, J. Augustus Michie, as Captain of the same company. Captain Henry C. Michie fought at Gettysburg; he was one of the few who penetrated Federal lines and was taken prisoner of war. Henry Clay Michie and his family owned Bel Aire from 1889 to 1900 when it was sold to a local farmer, George W. Dickerson, in 1900. The 1900 census for Henry C. Michie lists him as residing in the Court House precinct of Albemarle County with four of his six children; Winston (b. 1872), Millie (b. 1874), Eunice (b. 1876), and Henry C. Jr. (b. 1882). George Dickerson was forty-six years of age married to Selina G. Dickerson (thirty-eight), and had six children at the time of the purchase. It appears that about this time the wood-frame mud room/wood shed was built in the corner of the office addition on the façade.

In the 1910 Federal Census, Dickerson is listed along with his wife and eight children including Brandon C. (25), Viola M. (24), Julien H. (19), Lattie B. (16), a daughter (14), Benjamin K. (13), James D. (10), and George E. (6). The oldest Dickerson son, Brandon, worked as a telegraph operator for the railroad. The 1910 land book lists George Dickerson with two taxable sections of Bel Aire. One is 368 acres, which was deeded by Michie and the second is a 70-acre parcel. The



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buildings on the original 368-acre parcel were valued at \$1,474 and the land valued at \$2,211 compared to the \$3,000 building value in 1872-1876. The decrease in building value may be partially due to the substantial decrease in property size, which may have held numerous farm buildings.

In 1920, Dickerson remains listed as a farmer and resides with his wife and four children (Viola, Benjamin, James, and George W.). The 1922 land book records the buildings valued at \$1,800 and the land at \$3,100. It appears that Selina Dickerson had passed away by 1930, as she is not listed in the 1930 census with George Dickerson. Additionally, the only members remaining in the house at this time include George Dickerson, Viola, George W. Jr. and his wife, Norwood F. In 1936, just prior to Dickerson's death, the buildings were valued at \$1,740 and the land was \$2,800.

George Dickerson died in 1937 and soon thereafter the property was conveyed by Benjamin Dickerson to Aston E. McMurdo.<sup>16</sup> The values of Bel Aire listed in 1936 did not change until 1940, when the building value increased \$800 and the land value of \$2,800 remained the same. It appears at this time, that the second facade entry was removed as was the door on the second floor opening onto the porch. Other alterations updating the house probably occurred at this time, including electricity and plumbing.

The value of buildings increased again in 1945, five years later, by \$120. The land value remained steady. During this period, the concrete-block garage was constructed. The land then exchanged hands seven times between 1948 and 1959 when it was finally sold by Eldon Lipscomb and Emma May Smith to Nelsen N. and Emily Carr Gates.<sup>17</sup> The Gates owned Bel Aire for fourteen years when they sold it Frank J. III and Margaret K. Quayle in 1973.<sup>18</sup> The Quayles are responsible for the sunroom addition on the rear elevation built around 1980. In 1992, Sidney Hecht purchased the property from the Quayles after a residence of nearly twenty years.<sup>19</sup>

Bel Aire: A German-influenced Federal-style House

*Federal Style*

Bel Aire is locally significant as a rare demonstration of a German-influenced Federal style during the mid 1820s in northern Albemarle County, Virginia. Its Federal elements exhibited on the exterior include the brick construction and bond pattern, symmetry, and diminished horizontal emphasis to a focus on vertical elements. The modest and polished exterior portrays a German influence simply with the combination of the two-story height, four-bay façade, and most notably two centered entries.

Much more graceful and refined than the Georgian style, the Federal style dates from about 1780 to 1830, and became the dominant style throughout America during this period. Nearly a decade following the finished design of *Monticello* (1769-1809), the Federal style reached its zenith in Albemarle County during the 1820s. Many of Jefferson's two hundred trained builders constructed numerous Jeffersonian buildings throughout the county including *Estouteville* (1827-1830, VDHR # 002-0032), *Edgehill* (1828, VDHR # 002-0026), and *Morven* (1821, VDHR # 002-0054).

Promoted primarily through European sources, the style was developed most notably by Robert Adam, an English architect. The strong influence of Adam eventually gave this particular style his name: Adamesque. Similarly, an architect in the United States that had an incredible amount of influence on American architecture during the period was

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Asher Benjamin. The basics of the style developed out of a regenerated interest around the turn-of-the nineteenth century in classical ideas, motifs, and styles. Emphasizing symmetry, verticality, scaled proportions, modesty and elegance, the Federal style was quickly adopted across the Eastern seaboard.

Similar to the Georgian style, Federal-style houses typically featured a simple square-shaped footprint with a double-pile plan. The Federal style in Albemarle County and throughout Virginia as a whole is typically exhibited with brick as the exterior wall material usually laid in a Flemish bond. The side and rear elevations of Federal-style buildings vary between either Flemish or American brick bond. Exterior symmetry remained a dominant aspect of the style. It is also characterized by increased verticality of elements removing the use of horizontal divisions such as delineated water tables, string courses, and heavy cornices, all elements common to the previous Georgian style.

Distinguished with its brick construction, Bel Aire is built in Flemish bond on the façade and the west elevation, whereas the opposite sides are constructed in five-course American bond. Common to Virginia rural architecture, the facades visible to the public were constructed in the more refined Flemish style, while the more economical five-course bond was used for the less publicly viewed facades. The south elevation faced the road, while the east elevation faced toward the North Fork of the Rivanna River. However, this elevation was set back far enough from the river not to be considered public. Additionally, the fine craftsmanship of the masonry with penciled joints is also a common characteristic of the Federal style.

Symmetry was one of the leading elements in the design of Bel Aire as shown on the public facades on both the east and south. The primary façade is symmetrically punched with four bays on both the first and second stories. The west elevation is pierced with three bays on the first three levels. Interestingly, the house maintains visible symmetrical fenestration with the employment of a false middle window at the basement level. The elevations not visible to the public are asymmetrical and do not employ any false windows. The symmetry of the house is tied together with the use of a chimney curtain on each pair of the interior-end brick chimneys. According to *Architecture of Jefferson Country*, a comprehensive study of important Albemarle County resources, the chimney curtain on Bel Aire is the only remaining example noted within the county.<sup>20</sup>

As previously mentioned, Federal-style dwellings are depicted with vertical elements and lack horizontal architectural divisions. Bel Aire features elongated six-over-six windows, a modest water table not used for embellishment, no string course, and a light wood cornice (which may not be original to the house). Small entry porches are another typical element added to Federal-style dwellings that are not seen on the earlier Georgian houses. Supported with paired Tuscan columns, Bel Aire has a porch sheltering the two center bays. Other Federal-style exterior characteristics depicted on Bel Aire are the use of flat lintels with corner blocks and a semi-circular single-sash window in the attic on the west elevation. This elevation was determined a publicly viewable façade unlike the river side elevation which is not counterbalanced with a similar semi-circular window.

The characteristics found on the interior of Bel Aire that typify the Federal style include the classically-designed mantles, chair rails, paneled wainscoting, bull's-eye corner blocks, reeded false newel posts, and an emphasis on the window and door treatments. The fireplaces throughout the house are detailed with oval paterae, gougework, and reeded pilasters and

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colonettes. The molding profiles found throughout the house on the chair rails, baseboards, mantles, are Roman influenced moldings using quirked ovolos, echinus, as well as column reeding.

The architectural significance of Bel Aire culminates in the strict adherence to Federal style motifs and design elements both on the interior and exterior sharply contrasting to its unusual asymmetrical floor plan, a rare German influence. Symmetry is a hallmark element to the exteriors of Federal-style houses, however, it is not an ideal interior characteristic. The introduction of non-square spaces including rectangular, oval, and circular, took prominence in high-style Federal dwellings. Additionally, creating varied spatial arrangements was key in breaking away from the strict symmetry of the Georgian period. These concepts were pioneered by Robert Adam. According to *American Buildings and their Architects* by William H. Pierson, Jr. the Federal style was largely defined as an interior style. Analyzing Adam's writings, Pierson states that Adam's interior spaces were arranged and designed according to need rather than to a formal principal.<sup>21</sup> Federal-style interiors were not designed to be "symmetrically disposed" but rather to ideally perform their function as a social, living, and service space. These concepts are creatively implemented in the floor plan of Bel Aire melding with it a four-room German form.

*Early Nineteenth Century German Influences*

Bel Aire displays Germanic influence on the exterior with the two front doors on the façade as well as the interior with its compact asymmetrical four-room plan lacking a central passage. German-influenced dwellings are rare in Albemarle County, Virginia, which lacked a significant German population. In Ed Lay's architectural study of Albemarle County there is only one other noted extant example of a double-pile dwelling with a two door façade similar to Bel Aire. *The Oaks* (VDHR # 002-0940), built around 1834 in Keswick, features a slightly similar floor plan as Bel Aire with no front center passage and two front rooms functioning as the primary social spaces.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries German immigrants developed large concentrations of populations throughout Virginia and the Mid-Atlantic area including Maryland, Delaware, and particularly Pennsylvania, out of which the term Pennsylvania Dutch was derived. Through acculturation of the German population into the more dominant Anglo culture, truly German house forms of the eighteenth century were adapted into more common house types and styles. This acculturation can be seen extensively throughout the large German population centers beginning around the turn-of-the nineteenth century. At this time Germans began to use the I-house form as well as implementing contemporary Federal and Georgian elements creating a unique American house type. Becoming commonplace during the first half of the nineteenth century, this German-American house has been referred to by some as the "Pennsylvania Farmhouse."<sup>22</sup> It consists of two stories, four bays, brick, frame or stone construction with a side-gable roof and two centered entries. It was the two door façade that became the last remaining vestige of a Germanic exterior reflecting a modified Germanic interior floor plan.

German populations in the Mid-Atlantic as well as Virginia did not entirely adopt Anglican interiors as can be seen in Georgian and Federal style houses as well as vernacular I-house types. The two-door façade gave German families some familiarity with old-world forms and allowed them to more easily maintain versions of their Germanic interiors. One of the most common German house forms brought to America during the eighteenth century by German immigrants was the flurkuchenhaus, hall-kitchen house or sometimes referred to as the "continental German" house type.<sup>23</sup> This compact house form consisted of a first floor plan of either two, three, or four rooms and no passageway. Another common German

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form was the kreuzenhaus type, a cross-plan form with pairs of larger and smaller rooms diagonally opposite also without a passageway.

Each flurkuchenhaus interior contains a kuche, a narrow kitchen, and a stube, which is similar to an American parlor. The purely German flurkuchenhaus also featured a central chimney which served both the kuche and stube. Anglicized houses replaced the central chimney with end chimneys. Three-room plans of the flurkuchenhaus contained a kammer (bed chamber) to the rear of the stube and four-room plans added a smaller workroom or pantry to the rear of the kuche. Most notably, entry into a flurkuchenhaus was directly into the kitchen space, which also served as the informal social space. Similar to a flurkuchenhaus, the kreuzenhaus type contains the kuche, stube, kammer, however, it also has a fourth room used as an entry hall. This plan developed from the three-room flurkuchenhaus by adding a partition in the kuche at the front of the chimney hearth creating an unheated entry hall or rather a second social space similar to the Georgian hall.

Around the turn-of-the nineteenth century, German builders embraced the idea of exterior symmetry as exhibited on Federal-style dwellings and strayed away from a typical flurkuchenhaus open interior. Interestingly, German builders attained exterior symmetry while preserving an asymmetrical interior by using a two-door façade. The kreuzenhaus type became the more popular form in the Mid-Atlantic and Virginia allowing the kitchen to be partitioned off giving it a back room location. This also created a second social space at the front of the house. This more Georgian interior of two front rooms dedicated to social functions allowed for two entries; one into each of the social spaces, formal and informal, one for guests and one for families. Additionally, creating more spaces within this modified kreuzenhaus type, Germans were able to separate work functions from pleasure, entertaining and social functions, which became an important American concept during the Georgian and Federal periods thus allowing further acculturation.<sup>24</sup>

Bel Aire is an example of a modified Germanic kreuzenhaus plan employing the use of two front doors. German forms are both common and widespread throughout neighboring Shenandoah Valley, however, such influences were rare in Albemarle County. It is unknown as to why James Michie used this form, however, with the proximity to the Shenandoah Valley it is possible that he used his wealth and political influence to use German builders from neighboring counties to the west. Michie may have increased his prominence by creating a residence that was uniquely different from the ubiquitous I-house or Georgian central-passage plan.

Just as Robert Adam promoted, Michie was concerned that the design of the house was reflective of the various necessary functions. This is illustrated with the configuration of a service stair in addition to the main stair. The configuration of the service stair in Bel Aire was easily implemented in the Germanic kreuzenhaus floor plan allowing for a simple exterior footprint while providing interior access to the basement, parlor, dining room, kitchen, and a second floor bedroom. This was quite an ingenious method of introducing a pair of straight flight stairs that led to the basement as well as to the second floor both of which remained nearly invisible to the owner, his family, and his guests. This furthered the separation of functions within the main body of the house.

One of the interesting design aspects of the floor plan is the inclusion of a third bedroom on the second floor that does not have an individual entrance from the main hall. It is accessed through the smaller second bedroom in addition to the back stair leading to the first floor. Due to the location of this bedroom with access by way of the servant's stair allows speculation that it may have been used as a nursery or a servant's bedroom. Details in this room support the theory that it

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most likely served as a children's bedroom or nursery. House servants were often in charge of child rearing and would have been required to have easy but less visible access to the nursery.

Bel Aire is an excellent and unique example of a Federal-style house built by a successful and locally-important politician and farmer. Mitchie's house, though relatively modest in scale, reflected his wealth and status by its use of high-style architectural elements on both the exterior and interior. The unusual asymmetrical interior plan is functional yet respectable. Most of all, this house is architecturally significant in Albemarle County as a rare example of a German-influenced Federal-style dwelling featuring a two-door façade and a modified kreuzenhaus floor plan.

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**Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Johnson Michie, *The Michies*, 1942. Library of Congress Number: CS 71 M 623 1942

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Johnson Michie, *The Michies*, 1942. Library of Congress Number: CS 71 M 623 1942

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Garth eventually became father-in-law to James H. Michie and Bezaleel Brown married Elizabeth Michie, the younger sister of James Michie.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Michie was the oldest of Scotch John's sons and lived in Louisa County according to the Michie Family history, *The Michies*, p. 44.

<sup>5</sup> Albemarle County Land Records, May 8, 1820, Deed book 22 Folio 241.

<sup>6</sup> Albemarle County Land Records, 1824, Deed book 24 Folio 254.

<sup>7</sup> Mary Rawlings, *Ante-bellum Albemarle* (Charlottesville, VA: The Peoples National Bank, 1935). Rawlings state that Dr. J. Augustus Michie and Henry C. Michie were both born at Bel Aire. J. Augustus Michie was the fifth child born to James and Frances Michie in 1826 or 1827, p. 41. The first four children born were Mary Elizabeth Michie, Virginia Michie, Susan Michie, and Adeline Michie.

<sup>8</sup> Albemarle County Land Records, Deed book 49 folio 390.

<sup>9</sup> J. Augustus and Susan Michie continued to have four more children; Helen Michie, Robert E. Lee Michie, Susan Michie, and Newton Michie. Robert E. Lee Michie died in France in 1918 as Brigadier General.

<sup>10</sup> Seventh-Tenth United States Census Schedules, 1850-1880: Virginia. United States Bureau of the Census. (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1988), microfilm.

<sup>11</sup> The majority of these lower class residents did not own any property as no values are listed in the real estate column.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Johnson Michie, *The Michies*, 1942. Library of Congress Number: CS 71 M 623 1942. Copy located at Michie Tavern educational center.

<sup>13</sup> Albemarle County Land Records, April 1, 1880, Deed book 76 Folio 32.

<sup>14</sup> Albemarle County Land Records, May 19, 1884, Deed book 90 Folio 64.

<sup>15</sup> Albemarle County Land Records, December 31, 1889, Deed book 92 Folio 416.

<sup>16</sup> Albemarle County Land Records, February 20, 1937, Deed book 35 Folio 474.

<sup>17</sup> Albemarle County Land Records, May 26, 1959, Deed book 347 Folio 26.

<sup>18</sup> Albemarle County Land Records, August 14, 1973, Deed book 535 Folio 518.

<sup>19</sup> Albemarle County Land Records, September 9, 1992, Deed book 1251 Folio 512.

<sup>20</sup> K. Edward Lay, *The Architecture of Jefferson Country : Charlottesville and Albemarle County, Virginia*. (Charlottesville, VA: UP of VA, 2000). A search was made through the database for chimney curtains.

<sup>21</sup> William H. Pierson, *American Buildings and Their Architects, Vol.1 The Colonial and Neoclassical Styles*, (New York: Oxford UP, 1970), p. 216.

<sup>22</sup> Charles Bergengren, "The Cycle of Transformation in Schaefferstown, Pennsylvania, Houses," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture IV*, edited by Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman (Columbia, Missouri: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1991), p. 101.

<sup>23</sup> Bergengren, p. 98.

<sup>24</sup> Bergengren, p. 98-107; Edward A. Chappell, "Acculturation in the Shenandoah Valley: Rhenish Houses of the Massanutten Settlement," *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*, edited by Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach (Athens, GA: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1986), p. 27-57.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The property at 4710 Dickerson Road in Albemarle County, Virginia, known as Bel Aire, is located on Parcel 4A as noted on Tax Map 32 found in the Albemarle County Courthouse and online under real estate assessment records at <http://albemarlepropertymax.governmaxa.com>.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property consists of 15.388 acres and includes the entire parcel associated with Bel Aire. The 15.388 acres are all that remains associated with the main dwelling. It includes the main house, a chicken coop, cemetery, foundations, garage, and corn crib that have been historically associated with Bel Aire since its construction circa 1825.

Photographs

Name: Bel Aire (002-0001)  
County: Albemarle County, VA  
Photographer: Arcadia Preservation  
Date: 6/2006  
Location of Negatives: Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR)  
Negative # 23033

**1 of 12**

Exterior Main House, SW Corner

**2 of 12**

Exterior Main House, East Elevation

**3 of 12**

Interior, 1<sup>st</sup> floor hall, looking Southeast

**4 of 12**

Interior, 1<sup>st</sup> floor parlor, looking West

**5 of 12**

Interior, 1<sup>st</sup> floor dining room, looking Southeast

**6 of 12**

Interior, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor master bedroom, looking West

**7 of 12**

Interior, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor NW bedroom, looking East

**8 of 12**

Interior, basement NE room, looking Southeast

**9 of 12**

Interior, basement 1870 addition, looking South

**10 of 12**

Cemetery, looking Northwest

**11 of 12**

Chicken coop & Garage, looking Southeast

**12 of 12**

Corn crib, East corner